

A Newsletter Dedicated to Helping You Take a More Active Role in Your Healthcare

Stay Germ Free While Traveling



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Germs are everywhere when we travel. Touching things is pretty hard to avoid if you think about it, especially on long flights. Germs lie everywhere in airplanes - on arm rests, light and call buttons, overhead bin handles, bathroom doors and flush buttons, tray tables and window shades.

Below are suggestions on how to stay germ free while traveling.

How to prevent catching germs when you fly:

- **Hydrate** your body and sinuses. Drink lots of water, hot tea and juice (and less dehydrating coffee, cola and booze). Arid cabin air dries out crucial protective sinuses, leaving travelers more vulnerable to microbial infection. Steam from hydrating beverages like **herbal teas** will help keep mucous membranes moist. Basically, just keep drinking fluids all flight long.
- Look into flu shots, nasal flu sprays, and other new antivirals coming out all the time.
- In case you become ill, be sure to pack a supply of prescriptions and cold medications to save yourself the hassle of searching for a pharmacy at an airport or in an unfamiliar city.
- Try not to fly during **high flu seasons** or when the news is reporting an outbreak. The world is very small these days - a microbe from New Guinea could lurk on an armrest, right next to you, on tomorrow's commuter flight.
- Consider avoiding the most popular international travel routes.
- Wear a face **filter mask**. This would work if people had the nerve to wear them during a flight. A mask could almost completely prevent illness via air droplets, used properly.
- Wear **gloves**. Surgical gloves might be less obvious than a facial mask. This won't provide protection against airborne droplets, but will keep you from touching things and wiping your face.
- **Fly First Class or Business Class**. The better class seats are further apart. This can only be helpful when someone sneezes.
- No gloves or masks handy? **Try not to touch anything with your hands**. Don't shake hands with anyone. Avoid opening the overhead compartment or toilet handles with your bare hands - use your sleeve or a bandana/hanky. If you do have to touch something, remember to **wash your hands** briskly, with hot water and soap, before touching your face or eating.
- Use an alcohol-based **hand sanitizer** - a germicidal gel - if you cannot wash your hands.
- **Wipe surfaces** like arm rests, tray tables, seat belt buckles, vent controls and other non-porous surfaces with wipes. Bring your own and don't be afraid to use them.
- **Move your seat**, if possible, if your seatmates are sneezing, coughing or exhibiting obvious signs of flu or cold illness. You have the right to protect your health.

The Single Best Way to Prevent Illness:

Live a healthy lifestyle - eat right, sleep lots, prevent stress, don't smoke, and get some exercise. Yes, easier said than done for the busy businessman/woman. Living right will help your immune system do its job. Business travelers would do well to allow slack time in their busy lives to this sort of flu prevention. Remember, sick time is downtime, after all.

Sources: http://businesstravel.suite101.com/article.cfm/readers_stay_germfree_on_flights

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/34244436/ns/travel-tips/>